

The bZIP transcription factor ABI5 is shown to confer an enhanced response to exogenous abscisic acid during germination, seedling establishment and subsequent vegetative growth of plants. ABI5 is necessary, but not sufficient, to maintain germinated embryos in a quiescent state, abscisic acid also being required for maintaining the quiescent state. ABI5 production is enhanced by stress including high salt and drought. This protects plants from drought. Plants which overexpress ABI5 are hypersensitive to abscisic acid and retain water more efficiently than wild-type plants.

5